union
RAILWAYS

Mersham to the Channel Tunnel

The new Union Railway described

Mersham to the Channel Tunnel

Between Mersham and the Channel Tunnel, the Union Railway route generally runs within the previously safeguarded area, alongside the existing railway. Previously proposed landscaping and noise protection along this Ashford to Folkestone section of the route will be maintained. There are changes to the detailed route proposals in the Dollands Moor area.

Network South East express trains between Folkestone, Canterbury and London will cut about half an hour from present journeys, by using the Union Railway between Ashford and London.

Open for detailed route information

THE UNION RAILWAY

This booklet provides information about the route which the Government has announced for the Union Railway, the high-speed railway between London and the Channel Tunnel.

The Union Railway is designed to provide:

- **The main railway between Britain and continental Europe.**
- **A major increase in capacity and improvement in the quality of journeys between Kent, Essex and London.**
- **The transport spine for the development of the East Thames Corridor.**

The route has been chosen by the Government from options developed by Union Railways Limited, the agency company set up by British Rail in 1992. The engineering, environmental and financial plans for the Union Railway have been produced in association with more than 40 leading private-sector consultancies.

The detailed proposals for the railway will be refined and developed only after consultation with those affected. You can find out more by visiting our Information Centres - dates and times of their visits to your area will be announced in the local press.

This booklet also gives brief details of Union Railways policy on a range of issues - you can find more information in other Union Railways leaflets.

WHY IS THE UNION RAILWAY NEEDED?

The Union Railway will provide the essential capacity to meet fast-rising demand for international rail travel, following the opening of the Channel Tunnel. Around the turn of the century, the existing railways in Kent and South-East London will be unable to cope with the predicted growth in demand for travel.

The Union Railway will also offer major improvements in the quality of journeys between Kent, Essex and London - much faster journeys, greater reliability, and a wider range of destinations.

The Union Railway will carry both the growing international traffic, and more than 25,000 commuters each day, in much less space than a motorway, with much less damage to the environment.

As international trains and Network SouthEast express trains will use the Union Railway, existing railways will have more room, not only for improvements to passenger services, but also for international freight traffic attracted by the Channel Tunnel. This freight would otherwise cause a major increase in lorry journeys, and up to 45 million kg of additional exhaust emissions every year. The Union Railway could also itself carry freight.

THE CHOICE OF ROUTE

The route chosen by the Government, and described in this booklet, is based on the easterly approach to London, which the Government adopted in 1991. That corridor has been studied to find a route which is capable of meeting environmental standards, and which can provide regeneration opportunities and improved rail services within the South-East. While principally conceived as a twin-track, high-speed passenger railway, the route is also capable of carrying freight trains.

The new route runs to the Channel Tunnel from a new station at Kings Cross/St Pancras in London. It can also carry international trains from London Waterloo via the existing London to Chatham line and a link line from Longfield to the Union Railway near Gravesend.

BENEFITS FOR THE SOUTH-EAST

More than half of the peak-period trains on the new railway will be for travellers within South-East England. With new Network SouthEast express trains, the Union Railway can transform rail travel between Kent, Essex and London. It will carry many more people, with much shorter journey times, more reliably and in much greater comfort, to new destinations.

The Union Railway presents opportunities to support the South-East's economy, by improving transport links for development in the East Thames Corridor and for other regeneration projects along its route.

LIMITING DISTURBANCE

The Union Railway route is the result of a comprehensive sifting process, which rejected any option which did not meet the environmental standards normally applied to major infrastructure projects. Scope to further limit effects on people, property and the environment will be discussed during the consultation process - the results of this will be carefully taken into account.

It is intended that the construction of the Union Railway will be carried out under a strictly enforced Code of Practice, to be drawn up in consultation with Local Authorities. Construction traffic would use railway land whenever possible, to limit disturbance.

PROPERTY EFFECTS

By next winter, the detailed route of the new railway is expected to be reserved, or "safeguarded", against other development. It is expected that details of property purchase arrangements will be announced at that stage.

DISCUSS YOUR CONCERNS

Union Railways wants householders, property owners, and all others affected by its proposals to have an opportunity to discuss them in detail with designers, planners and environmental specialists. This will be possible at the Information Centres which will be visiting about 40 locations along the route. The location and opening hours of the Centres will be announced in the local press.

Consultation is also being carried out with Local Authorities and other interested bodies. The Information Centres will return in the autumn to provide details of the outcome of the consultation process.

The Information Centres are intended to provide the best opportunity for direct contact with Union Railways. But if you are unable to visit one of the Centres, or if you would like more information, then please write to the address overleaf, or phone 081 760 5002 and speak to one of the liaison team.

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KEY

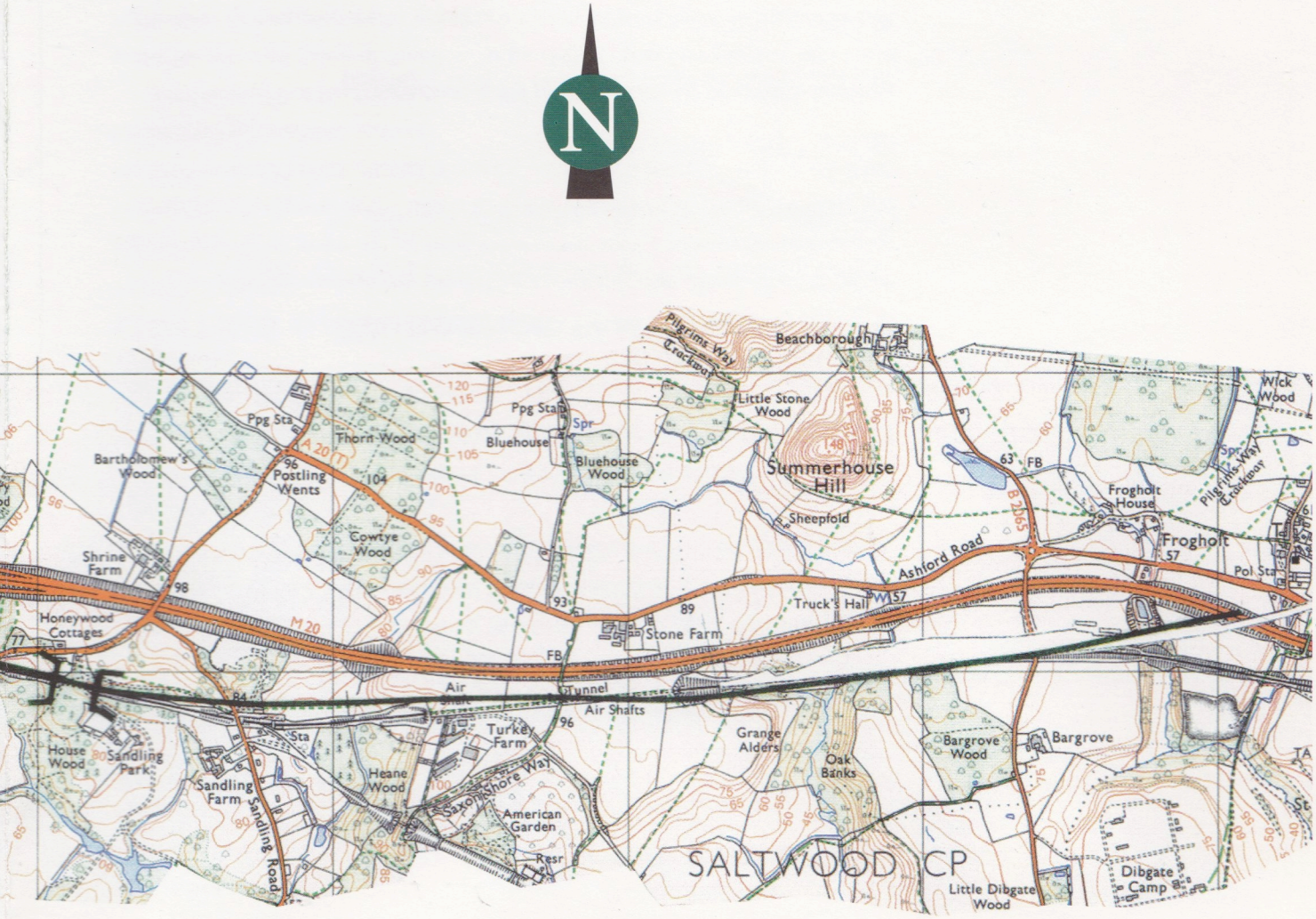
The Union Railway

Surface ——

Tunnel - - - -

Ashford: Mersham and the Forstal

Mersham to the Channel Tunnel



Shepway: Barrow Hill and Westenhanger

MERSHAM

Approaching Mersham from the west, the Union Railway will run close to the listed Loud House and Bridge House, taking some land from them.

The Union Railway will pass through Mersham in a section of roofed-over cutting, covering both the Union Railway and existing railway. This maintains the environmental measures agreed in previous consultations, which will lessen effects on the community, and on the group of historic buildings close to the church.

The meadow running from the church will be extended over the top of the covered cutting. The landscaping and protection against noise which were previously proposed east of Mersham will also be provided.

SELLINDGE

Between Mersham and Sellindge, the Union Railway will run beside the existing railway and pass close to Park Wood Cottages, where part of the stables will be demolished.

Near Sellindge, the Union Railway route runs tightly between the M20 motorway and the existing railway, and crosses the A20 at Grove Bridge. The White Swan (Mucky Duck) public house will be demolished. The listed Talbot House lies across the route: it will be carefully taken down and could be rebuilt on another site.

Next to the existing Sellindge electricity converter station is the site of a proposed electricity feeder station for the Union Railway.

WESTENHANGER

At Westenhanger station, the platform on the north side will be narrowed, and The Limes bungalow will be demolished. Stone Street bridge will be rebuilt and extended.

The location of freight and maintenance facilities for the Union Railway will be the subject of public consultation. A site north and west of Westenhanger station, between the motorway and the railway, is being considered as a possible site for a future rail freight yard or maintenance base.

SANDLING

The Union Railway will pass under Ashford Road. To preserve the appearance of the entrance to Sandling Park, there will be a short tunnel, alongside the existing ornamental tunnel. The Union Railway will pass beneath Sandling Road and to the north of Sandling station. Hillside Cottages will be demolished.

The Union Railway will rise to cross the existing railway in a cutting over the top of Saltwood tunnel. On the south side, the line will run along the edge of Grange Alders and Oak Bank Woods, on a widened embankment.

DOLLANDS MOOR AND CHERITON

The Union Railway will run between the international rail freight yard and the existing London to Folkestone railway line. The existing railway will be realigned to the south on a widened embankment, and, near the west end of the freight yard, it will be lowered to allow the Union Railway to cross it. The Union Railway will join the Continental Main Line leading to the Channel Tunnel.

Shepway: Newington, Dollands Moor Yard

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OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE

These leaflets can be obtained from the Information Centres, or by writing to the address below:

- The Union Railway
- The Environment and the Union Railway
- Noise and Vibration
- Tunnelling
- The Union Railway and the UK
- Business Benefits from the Union Railway
- Consultation and the Union Railway
- Commuters and the Union Railway

Union Railways Limited
Network Technical Centre
Wellesley Grove
Croydon CR9 1DY
Telephone 081 760 5002

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Croydon CR9 1DY
Telephone 081 760 5002

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